

receiving packets at the packet forwarding system including local audio packets and storing the packets in the memory of the packet forwarding system;

attempting to forward packets stored in the memory to the network;

establishing one or more time limit within which to forward packets stored in the memory to the network with the time limit linked to the type of the data included in the packet;

monitoring an elapsed period of time while attempting to forward packets stored in the memory to the network; and

canceling said attempting to forward a packet stored in the memory to the network, when the elapsed period of time exceeds the time limit associated with the type of the data included in the packet.

Claim 3 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of allowing transmission of the packet stored in the memory to be completed when that packet is currently being transmitted over the network.

Claim 4 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of interrupting transmission of the packet stored in the memory when that packet is currently being transmitted over the network.

Claim 5 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of resetting a timer to allow additional attempts to forward the packet stored in the memory when that packet is not currently being transmitted over the network.

Claim 6 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising replacing the packet stored in memory with a new packet including the same data as the replaced packet when it is determined to cancel the forwarding of the stored packet.

Claim 7 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein: said new packet includes different data than the replaced packet when it is determined to cancel the forwarding of the stored packet.

Claim 8 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the packet stored in memory includes time-sensitive data and protocol-related data, and the new packet has the same time-sensitive data and different protocol-related data as the replaced packet.

Claim 9 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of:  
resetting a back-off level; and

attempting to forward the new packet to the network.

Claim 10 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

10. The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of:  
initiating attempts to transmit the new packet to the network; and  
resetting the elapsed period of time.

Claim 11 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

11. The method of claim 8 wherein the packet stored in memory includes time-sensitive data and the step of replacing the packet stored in memory with a new packet can occur a predetermined maximum number of times.

Claim 12 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

12. The method of claim 7 wherein the packet stored in memory includes time-sensitive data and protocol-related data, and the new packet has different time-sensitive data and the same protocol-related data as the replaced packet.

Claim 13 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

13. The method of Claim 1 wherein the steps of monitoring, establishing the time limit, and determining whether to cancel forwarding the packet stored in memory occur only when the packet stored in the memory includes time-sensitive data.

Claim 30 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

30. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said step of receiving packets includes receiving a packet at said packet forwarding system from a network collision domain that is different from the collision domain associated with the forwarding device.

Claim 31 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows:

31. A method for forwarding packets to a network, comprising the steps of:

- providing a packet forwarding system with a memory, said packet forwarding system being connected to the network;
- receiving an analog signal and generating local audio packets with local audio data;
- receiving packets at the packet forwarding system including the audio packets and storing the packets in the memory of the packet forwarding system;
- attempting to forward the packet stored in the memory to the network;
- establishing one or more time limit within which to forward packets stored in the memory including a time limit based on the packet containing local audio data;
- monitoring an elapsed period of time while attempting to forward a packet containing local audio data to the network; and
- canceling said attempt to forward the packet stored in the memory to the network when the packet contains local audio data and the elapsed period of time exceeds the time limit based on the packet containing local audio data.

Please amend claim 34 as follows:

34. (AMENDED) A network method for forwarding packets, the method comprising:  
providing a device with a local audio source and a packet controller for forming local audio packets;

providing a packet forwarding device with a memory, said packet forwarding device being connected to the device and being connected to a first collision domain and a second collision domain;

receiving packets at the packet forwarding device from the device, from the first collision domain and from the second collision domain and storing the packets in the memory of the packet forwarding system;

providing a time limit for local audio packets to be held in the memory;

attempting to forward packets stored in the memory to any one of the device and the first collision domain and the second collision domain;

monitoring an elapsed period of time while attempting to forward the local audio packet stored in the memory to one of the first collision domain and the second collision domain; and

canceling said attempting to forward the local audio packet stored in the memory to the one of the first collision domain and the second collision domain, wherein said audio packet contains time sensitive audio data and no time limit or a different time limit is established for packets received from one of said first collision domain and said second collision domain than for packets received with audio data.